

2.17 Road Upgrades, YTA

USAG-AK has proposed to upgrade several sections of road within the Yukon Training Area (Figure 30). The areas to be upgraded include 1) the Quarry, Johnson and Brigadier Roads intersection for approximately 1km to the west, 1km to the south and 1km to the east; 2) Skyline Road from its intersection with Quarry Road north to Firing Point 20; 3) the road to the Stuart Creek Impact area north from its intersection with Brigadier Road and 4) Quarry Road, from its intersection with Skyline Road, southeast to approximately 1km west of its intersection with Johnson and Brigadier Roads. These sections of road are characterized by poor drainage, insufficient and inappropriate road base and cap material, rutting and large erosion features, which impede access. The proposed upgrades will re-establish hardened road surfaces and drainage features, including out/in slopes, ditches, water bars and culverts. This will involve grading, ditching, installing geotextile and fill material. All activities will be confined to within 20 meters of the existing road edge. The purpose of these activities is to improve access throughout the Yukon Training Area. The proposed projects are located on map quadrangle XBD C6 in T3S, R5E and R6E.

Survey and Inventory

In July and August of 2005 the proposed road upgrades in the vicinity of the Quarry, Brigadier and Johnson Roads intersection (Area 1), and the southern portion of Skyline Road (Area 2) were pedestrian surveyed by a crew of four to five archaeologists employed by the Center for Environmental Management of Military Lands (CEMML, Colorado State University). In 2004 the road corridor for the road to the Stuart Creek Impact Area from its intersection with Brigadier Road (Area 3), and Quarry Road, from its intersection with Skyline Road, southeast to approximately 1km west of its intersection with Johnson and Brigadier Roads (Area 4) were surveyed by CEMML archaeologists. In Areas 1 and 2, approximately 80-100 meters on either side of the roads has been archaeologically surveyed. In Areas 3 and 4, approximately 30 meters on either side of the roads has been archaeologically surveyed.

Parallel pedestrian transects spaced at 20 meters or less were walked in all areas that were not deemed too wet or too steep ($>40^\circ$) to contain cultural material. In addition to pedestrian transects, 40cm x 40cm shovel tests were excavated throughout the project area. All excavated materials were screened through ¼" hardware cloth. Systematic sub-surface testing was undertaken in areas determined to be high probability (e.g., lake margins, ridges, benches adjacent to steeper slopes) during initial review of the proposed project area, and as determined by the supervising archaeologist and field crew leader based on survey findings. None of the shovel tests excavated contained any cultural material.

Additionally, a large amount of disturbance as a result of previous military activities, such as clearing and bulldozing, was found within the project area, particularly within 20-30 meters of the roads.

Cultural Resources

There are three known sites located within the area of potential effect for the proposed road upgrades. Site XBD-00093 has previously been found not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Site XBD-00094 was previously tested intensively by Holmes (1979) and Cook (1979) and re-investigated several times since, but not formally evaluated. The site was revisited again as part of this project and was

determined not eligible for the National Register. Site XBD-00266 was discovered during survey activities for this project and has also been determined not eligible for the National Register.

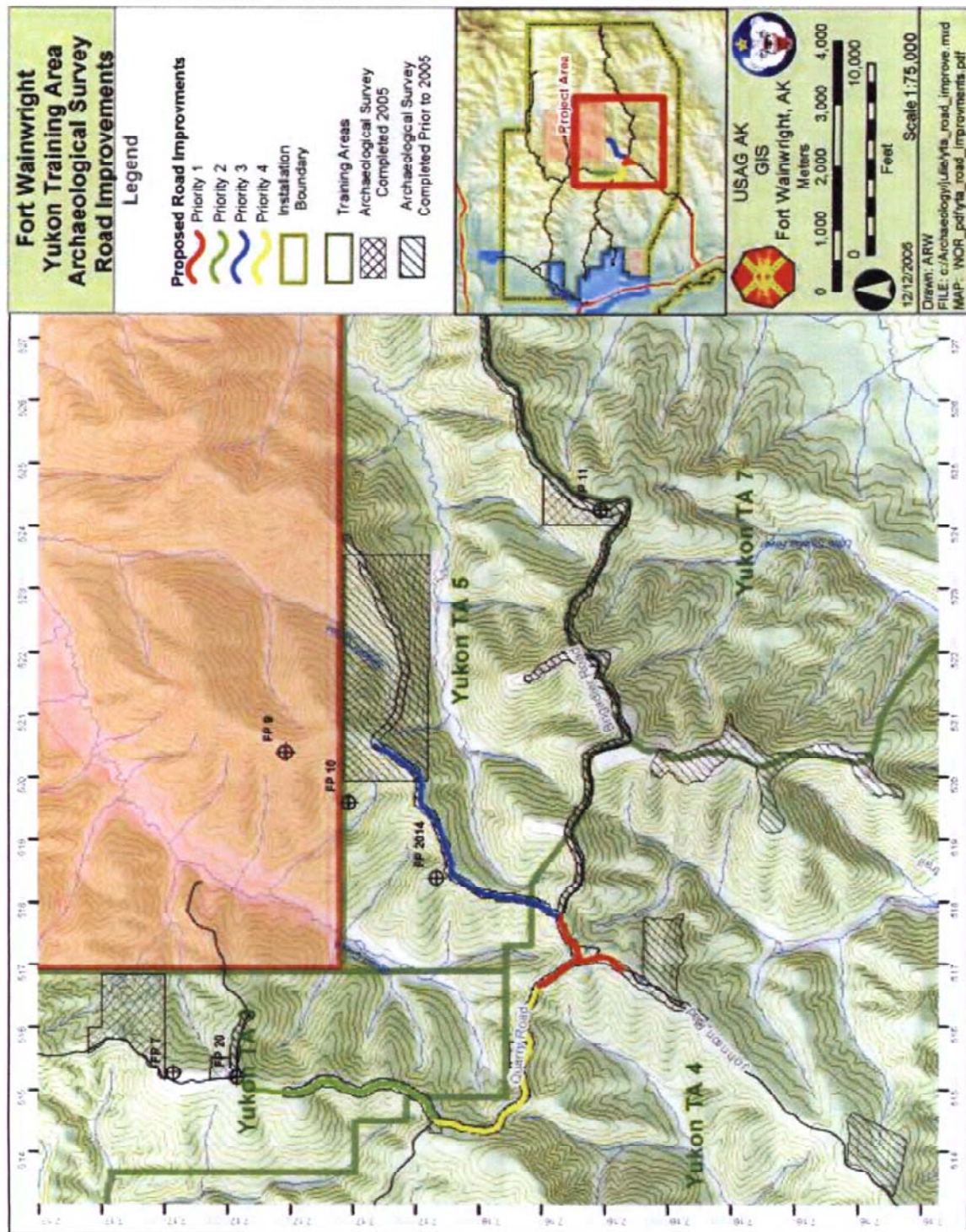


Figure 30. Map showing proposed road upgrades

XBD-00093

Latitude:

Longitude: (NAD 27)

Determination: Not Eligible

This site consists of one coarse grained beige chert flake found on the surface of Skyline Road along a ridge top portion of the road (Holmes 1979). UTM coordinates for the site are Zone 6, (WGS 84). This site was previously determined not eligible for the National Register in 1984 and 2005. Pedestrian survey and shovel testing at the site location, as well as the surrounding ridge top area, did not locate any additional cultural materials. This finding suggests that XMH-00093 is an isolated find. The site area may have been larger at one time, prior to the clearing of the road and pull-off areas in the vicinity of where the artifact was located. The paucity of cultural material and high degree of disturbance indicates that this site does not contain additional information that is important to our understanding of the prehistory or history of the region and is not eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

XBD-00094

Latitude:

Longitude: (NAD 27)

Determination: Not Eligible

This site consists of both surface and buried artifacts and is located just southeast of the intersection of Brigadier Road and Johnson Road. Surface artifacts include six obsidian flakes, one rhyolite flake, three chert flakes, two retouched chert flakes, and three fragments of a rhyolite scraper. One of ten test pits produced two more chalcedony flakes (Holmes 1979: 14). UTM coordinates for the site are Zone 6, (WGS 84).



Figure 31. Disturbance berms and re-growth in vicinity of XBD-00094

Findings

This site may have been entirely destroyed by past military activities. Pedestrian survey and shovel testing at the site location, as well as the surrounding hill top area (Quarry, Brigadier and Johnson Road intersection area), did not locate any additional archaeological materials. This finding suggests that XMH-00094 has been destroyed. The site area may have been larger at one time, prior to the clearing of the road and pull-off areas in the vicinity of where artifacts were initially found. Earthen berms, abandoned vehicles, miscellaneous trash and other debris, as well as foxholes and other

excavations, were found throughout the site area and extending as much as 100 meters from the actual road intersection. The majority of the disturbance appeared to be several years to a decade or more old. The high degree of disturbance indicates that this site does not contain additional information that is important to our understanding of the prehistory or history of the region and is not eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

XBD-00266

Latitude:

Longitude: (NAD 27)

Determination: Not Eligible

This site consists of a light gray biface found on the surface of Johnson Road in the vicinity of the Firebird Assault Strip. UTM coordinates for the site are Zone 6, (WGS84).

Findings

Pedestrian survey and shovel testing at the site location, as well as the surrounding ridge area, did not locate any additional cultural materials. This finding suggests that XMH-00266 is an isolated find. The site area may have been larger at one time, prior to the clearing of the road and landing strip. This artifact may also have been transported south along Johnson Road during road maintenance activities from site XBD-00094. The road corridor has been disturbed for at least 20 meters on either side of Johnson Road. The high degree of disturbance indicates that this site does not contain additional information that is important to our understanding of the prehistory or history of the region and is not eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

Results

No National Register eligible cultural resources were identified within the project area for the proposed road upgrades in the Yukon Training Area. Three sites located within the area of potential effect, XBD-00093, XBD-00094 and XBD-00266, have been determined not eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. All other previously recorded archaeological sites and historic properties in the Yukon Training Area fall outside the project area. USAG-AK has determined that no historic properties will be affected by the proposed road upgrades.



Figure 32. A portion of the survey area along Johnson Road